

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, wherein said particulate filter is a wall-flow particulate filter comprising a partition wall having pores, said partition wall carrying a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x on the exhaust gas upstream side surface thereof, said catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich; and

control means for making the air-fuel ratio in said catalytic apparatus rich to release NO_x from said catalyst of said catalytic apparatus to purify the released NO_x by reduction, and making the air-fuel ratio in the particulate filter rich to release NO_x from said catalyst of said particulate filter to purify the released NO_x by reduction so that said catalyst of said particulate filter also releases active-oxygen to oxidize and remove the particulates trapped on said particulate filter without producing luminous flame.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, said catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the

surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which catalytic apparatus carries a catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x when said air-fuel ratio is stoichiometric or rich;

control means for making the air-fuel ratio in said catalytic apparatus rich to release NO_x from said catalyst of said catalytic apparatus to purify the released NO_x by reduction, and making the air-fuel ratio in the particulate filter rich to release NO_x from said catalyst of said particulate filter to purify the released NO_x by reduction so that said catalyst of said particulate filter also releases active-oxygen to oxidize and remove the particulates trapped on said particulate filter without producing luminous flame ~~without further elevating the temperature of the trapped particulates to ignite and burn the trapped particulates; and~~ bypassing means to make possible the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter downstream said catalytic apparatus.

5. (Previously Presented) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 4, wherein during the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means makes the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter.

6. (Previously Presented) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine according to claim 4, wherein immediately after the finishing of the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means does not make the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter and thus the exhaust gas passes through said particulate filter.